

# GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

## Gacha: Save the World

GOTTA COLLECT'EM ALL

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## Game Analysis

*Gacha: Save the World* is a game about playing a game to collect characters within a limited timeframe. The fun is in using the lootbox system to receive randomized champions and hoping to get lucky. The player needs to balance their “real” life (within the game) and their play of the game (within the game) to maximize the number of lootboxes they can open.

The game is intended to draw attention to the many contemporary mobile games which utilize this free-to-play, microtransaction-laden skinner box design to addict players to their game and compel them to spend large amounts of money. *Gacha: Save the World* is designed to strip away as much of the aesthetics and create a fun experience using the fewest resources possible.

## Mission Statement

*Gacha: Save the World* is a mobile game where you play as generic employed person and need to make life choices to open as many lootboxes as you can in a game within this world. Can you manage your virtual life to become Earth’s best gamer and save humankind?

## Genre

Casual, roguelike, collection/gacha.

## Platforms

Mobile – Android/iOS. Potential to port to tablet in the future.

## Target Audience

*Gacha: Save the World* targets the casual game community, especially players who do not have the disposable income to spend continuously on their games. It allows them to fantasize about being a big spender in a free-to-play game while simultaneously not having any actual “pay to win” mechanics. Because there is some real-life strategy involved it is aimed at players who have an appreciation of real-life expenses, i.e. teenagers and older.

## Monetization

Premium model – pay-to-own. One-off price, no in-game microtransactions.

## Story

### World-building

The story is set on an Earth almost identical to the one that exists in real life. One notable difference is that there is a video game studio that has a monopoly over the industry, called Global Game Company.

### Characters

There are no named characters in the real-life portion of the game. The gacha game segment has hundreds of named characters that are listed in [later section].

### Story so far

It's another normal day, when out of nowhere, aliens invade earth. The combined military might of Earth does nothing to them. They issue a declaration: if humans want to live, they must send forth their most capable champion to represent humanity in a gaming competition in one year's time. The various governments work together with Global Game Company to produce a game that will help them make the selection. The gameplay begins the day this game is released.

## Gameplay

### Overview of Gameplay

*Gacha: Save the World* is a hybrid of traditional gacha collecting games and simulator games. It takes aspects of the needs-based system and job-based economy from *The Sims* and simplifies it down to a rudimentary level, and combines it with the typical gacha collection systems seen in games such as *Dragalia Lost*, *Epic 7* and *Destiny Child*.

As it is designed for the mobile platform, one important consideration is aspect ratio – specifically, the variety used by different phone manufacturers, especially on the Android system. Publishing for iPhone also requires Apple hardware. As there is a possibility of porting the game to tablet after the mobile release, the UI placement and asset sizes will need to be redesigned for the larger screen space.

There will only be one game mode – the single-player story campaign.

### Player Experience

There are two main experiences the player will encounter, with visually distinct UI and art styles to differentiate between them. The first is the “life management” section, where the player can view their “real-life” information, such as finances and any real-world events. They must make decisions on how they will spend their time and money that will affect the game state in the next turn. An example of this could be a promotion opportunity at the cost of access to the “game” portion for some number of turns.

The “game” section is intentionally isolated from the “real-life” section, in that only information pertinent to the “game” is displayed. It is separated into three main screens, with a “main menu” screen as the fourth. The three sub-menus are:

- The “characters” screen, for viewing the player’s collection and their progress of collecting the various characters
- The “lootbox” screen, where players can spend in-game currency to add to their character collection; and
- The “microtransactions” screen, where players can convert their “real-world” currency into in-game currency.

### Gameplay Guidelines

The two sections of the game must be visually distinct and isolated from each other as much as possible. The challenges of the “real-world” portion must be realistic and relatable. The “game” portion needs to seem as low effort as possible from a visual standpoint. It should not have any “gameplay” within it except for the opening of lootboxes to collect characters.

## Game Objectives & Rewards

The primary objective of *Gacha: Save the World* is to collect all the characters in the mobile game section. By allowing the player to view their collection at any point in the game, this not only gives them a visual representation of their progress but also motivates them to try and unlock the remaining characters. The reward for progressing to later stages is having more resources to unlock more characters; mismanagement of the “real-life” portion results in either decreased opportunity for collection or ends the game with a failure state (e.g. unable to pay bills).

## Gameplay Mechanics

The core gameplay revolves around the passage of time and the player’s decision as to how to spend that time; the game’s year-long story is split into week-long segments, making for 52 stages. There is no player movement; everything occurs on either a static background scene (the “real-life” portion) or game interface (the “game” portion).

The main factors the player must account for are money and health – if either gets too low, the game is over. The player’s goal – to obtain as many characters in the “game” section – is expediated by the exchange of “real-world” currency for in-game currency. This exchange rate will fluctuate over each week, as will “in-game” collection rates and events. The player is free to manage their currencies as they see fit – they are not forced to perform any actions excepting some partial failure states (e.g. health drops too low). Once they are satisfied with their decisions, they can progress time to the next stage and repeat the decision-making process.

Currency System	
Currency/value	How it’s Earned & Benefits
“Real-life” currency	Awarded at the beginning of each stage depending on the player’s job level. Currency is used to pay bills for utilities and can be spent to recover health and obtain in-game currency.
Player health	A numerical representation of the player character’s vitality. Small amounts of health are awarded at the beginning of each stage on the condition that the player does not spend it, e.g. by pulling all-nighters. It can also be increased by spending “real-life” currency.
In-game currency	A small amount is given at the beginning of each stage, which can be increased by expending health. “Real-life” currency can be exchanged for this at a rate that fluctuates between stages.

## Level Design

While not “levels” in the traditional sense, the game will be split up into 52 stages – one per week of the year. Each stage will have the same functions, but semi-randomized variables and events make decision-making interesting and dynamic. The player should not feel pressured but will still need to think strategically to obtain the best outcome. As currencies carry over, they will have to make both short-term and long-term strategic decisions in order to achieve their objective of collecting characters.

## The Story Synopsis

The player is tasked with becoming humanity’s champion by collecting the most characters within the timeframe of 1 year, or 52 weeks.

## The Player

The player character is intended to be a blank slate on which the player can project themselves. They are an average person with an unspecified job. Thus, any story progression is up to the player’s imagination and the decisions they make in response to situations that occur through the game.

## Levels

Levels	
Prologue	Sets the scene and tells the story to the player. Lets them decide their name.
Week 1	The “game” is released. A quick tutorial explains the basics of the “real-life” aspect of the game (job/earning money/health). Upon opening the “game”, a second tutorial begins that, upon completion, rewards the player with some in-game currency.
Week 52	The competition finishes. The player is assigned a score on how many characters they were able to collect.
Epilogue	The competition winner is revealed; the child of some incredibly rich family that completed the entire collection within a month of the game releasing.



## Systems Design

### Game-wide resource

- “Real-life” currency: this is the currency that affects both sections of the game. It is earned through the “Job system” and spent on the “Economics system”.

### Job system

- The primary way in which the player earns “real-life” currency.
- There is a progression system built in to increase the amount earned. Each week, the player makes some progress to the next tier, which can be accelerated by spending other resources (health, “real-life” currency).
- There are drawbacks to having a higher job tier; for example, the player may miss out on the “game” portion at certain times due to “business trips” or “work overtime”.

### Economics system

- A system that requires the player to spend “real-life” currency to continue the game. This is in the guise of bills, which are fixed, and other randomized amounts that give the player additional benefits, if paid, or drawbacks, if not.
- Examples of bills include electricity, food, repairs and healthcare.

### Gacha collection system

- The system that controls what the player draws when opening lootboxes. Like many gacha games on the market, each character has a rarity tier assigned that dictates its likelihood of being collected by the player each time they open a lootbox.
- There are four rarity tiers: “Common”, “Rare”, “Epic” and “Legendary”, which are ordered from most to least likely to be drawn.
- The game keeps track of characters that have been drawn and displays them on the “Character Collection” screen. Obtained characters are in color while the rest are grayed out.

### Character upgrade system

- The system for dealing with repeated draws. If a player has a copy of a character, any time it is collected subsequently will result in the original character being “upgraded” by a tier. There is no limit to the level that a character can be upgraded.
- The “upgrade level” of a character is also shown in the “Character Collection” screen if it has one.

### Weekly event system

- A system of pseudo-random in-game discounts and rewards that incentivize the player to spend in-game currency. This is intended to introduce some uncertainty into the player's decision-making process and have them consider sacrificing other resources to spend in the "game" section.

### Player health system

- A system that measures the player character's overall "health" and represents it numerically.
- It is depleted through the player deciding to perform actions such as pulling all-nighters, not having enough food, and catching illnesses.
- It replenishes naturally over time if not spent and can also be increased by spending money in the "economics system" on healthcare items.

### Cross-game progression system

- For each time the player completes a game (52 weeks), they can incrementally improve one of their statistics permanently, which will influence future games.
- These improvements include increased starting finances, a higher tier starting job, increased health replenishment, and decreased costs in the "Economics system".

### Save system

- In order to prevent players from "cheating" the game by opening lootboxes, then quitting the game and attempting until they receive the characters they want, the game will save the player state after certain actions. This has the added benefit of allowing the player to make progress, close the app, and then resume from where they left off later.
- The game will save every time a character is received from a lootbox. Additionally, the game will also save when the player progresses time to the next week. This affords the player some leniency when making "real-life" decisions.

## Interface

### Navigating Menus and HUDs

As the game is designed for the mobile platform all navigation will be touch based. In the "real-life" section, the informational HUD will comprise a simple bar at the top that indicates the current week, health and "real-world" currency information. There will be some floating buttons placed above appropriate visual cues that will reveal menus for that type of action, for example health-related options.

The “in-game” HUD will have a similar top bar, although it will only show the name of the current screen and the amount of in-game currency. Mockups for the “in-game” menu layouts are shown in the “Control Scheme” section.

### **Main Menu**

The game will have multiple save slots which will be displayed on the main menu alongside a button that accesses the configuration window as well as an “exit” button.

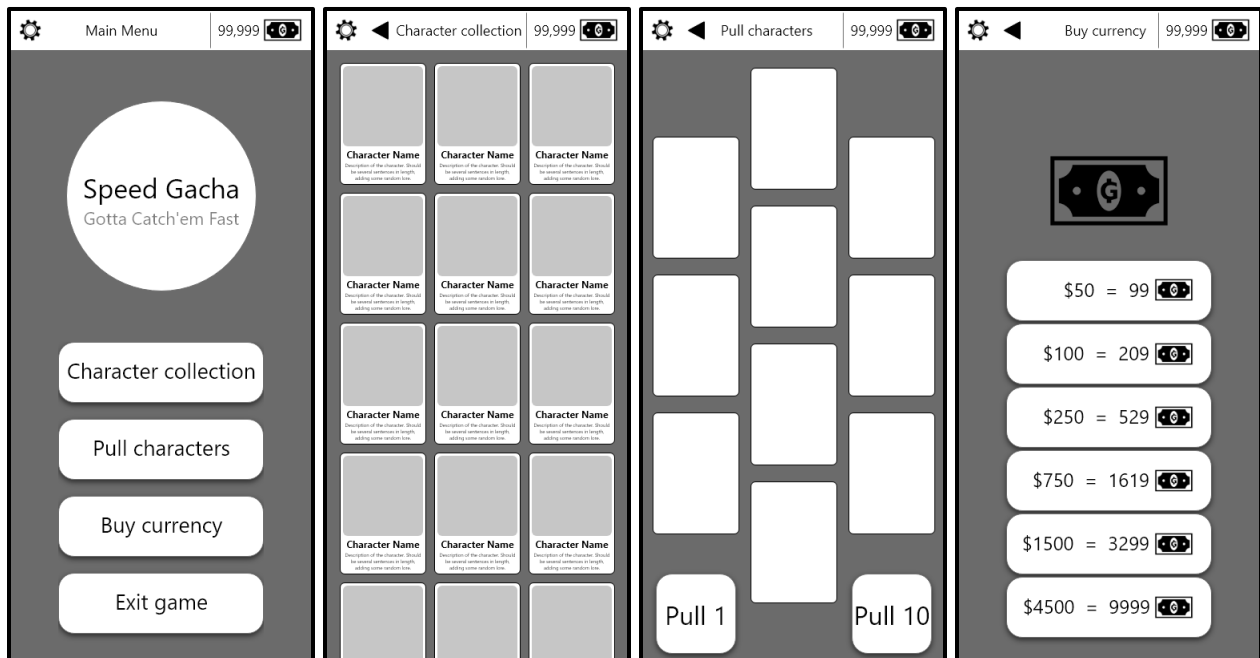
### **Configuration Window**

The configuration window will house settings for brightness, volume, and access to the main menu.

## Control Scheme

As *Gacha: Save the World* is designed for the mobile platform, it will use a touch input system. Using familiar icons and labelled buttons will make each input action obvious for the player.

Button/ Touch Input – “In-game” section	Action it Performs
Back button (appears on multiple screens)	Returns to previous screen
Settings button (appears on multiple screens)	Open settings for the “game” portion
Character collection button	Transitions to the “character collection” screen
Pull characters button	Transitions to the “pull character” screen
Buy currency button	Transitions to the “buy currency” screen
Exit game button	Exits the “game” section and transitions to the “real-life” section
Buy currency buttons	Converts “real-life” currency into “in-game” currency at the rate written
Pull 1/Pull 10 buttons	Spend in-game currency to open the number of lootboxes indicated



Mock-ups of the “game” section UI. From left to right: Main Menu, Character Collection, Pull Characters, Buy Currency

## Audio Design

The audio design of the “real-life” section should simulate the sounds of evening suburban life and be soothing, for instance light breezes and rain on occasional weeks. The background music should also foster this gentle, relaxing feeling.

The audio design of the “game” section should be simplistic and one-dimensional, and contrast strongly with the atmosphere of the “real-life” section. “Sparkly” sound effects and high-tempo music should be the core of the audio experience.

## Social/Marketing Considerations

Given that *Gacha: Save the World* is a pseudo-satire of traditional gacha games while still employing the same mechanics, some concerns about hypocrisy may arise. However, the use of the premium business model should dissuade any arguments from taking hold. Additionally, drawing attention to what many consider to be a highly lucrative revenue stream for game studios may alienate the developer of *Gacha: Save the World* from the rest of the community, potentially affecting their employment in the future.

## Schedule & Timelines

The game should be prototyped and playable in the game engine by 11 March. It should be production-ready by 27 May.

### Alpha target – 11 March

The game's core mechanics should be implemented at this stage. A 5-week-long vertical slice should showcase the main functionality, which is the "Collection System", "Economics System", "Job System" and "Health System". Progress on the "Character Upgrade" system would be a bonus.

Tasks to Complete & Schedule			
Tasks	Start	End	% Complete
<b>Alpha Phase</b>			
Collection system	17/02/20	23/02/20	50 %
Basic character list	17/02/20	23/02/20	0 %
Job system	24/02/20	01/03/20	0 %
Economics system	24/02/20	01/03/20	0 %
Health system	24/02/20	01/03/20	0 %
Rough art	02/03/20	08/03/20	0 %
Basic audio	02/03/20	08/03/20	0 %
Testing/debugging	09/03/20	11/03/20	0 %
Alpha trailer	09/03/20	11/03/20	0 %
<b>Alpha release</b>	09/03/20	11/03/20	5 %
<b>Beta Phase</b>			
Character upgrade system	23/03/20	05/04/20	0 %
Weekly event system	30/03/20	12/04/20	0 %
Cross-game progression system	06/04/20	19/04/20	0 %
Save system	06/04/20	19/04/20	0 %
Final sounds	13/04/20	26/04/20	0 %
Final art/UI	20/04/20	03/05/20	0 %
Game logo/title	27/04/20	03/05/20	0 %
Debugging	04/05/20	24/05/20	0 %
<b>Release Phase</b>			
Promotional video	04/05/20	27/05/20	0 %
Marketing mockups	20/04/20	27/05/20	0 %
Senior show deck	20/04/20	27/05/20	0 %
<b>Published build</b>	25/05/20	27/05/20	0 %